



Information for Patients & Caregivers

What You Need to Know About Type 2 Diabetes

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There is a hormone in your body called **insulin** that regulates your blood sugar level. It is produced from a gland called the **pancreas** located close to the stomach.

Insulin transfers glucose from the blood to the cells of the body. If the pancreas does not produce enough insulin, glucose builds up in the blood and causes damage.

+ AN INTRODUCTION

Diabetes is a condition in which the blood sugar level becomes too high. This can be due to either a lack of insulin production from the pancreas, or resistance to insulin's action in the body.

There are two main types of diabetes:

- Type 1 diabetes.
- Type 2 diabetes.

+ WHAT IS TYPE 2 DIABETES?

Type 2 diabetes occurs when your body resists the effects of insulin. Sugar then builds up in the blood and causes damage to the blood vessels, kidneys, and eyes, and can lead to heart attacks and strokes.

It is the most common type of diabetes and is also more common in adults, but it can develop at any age.

Type 2 diabetes usually develops slowly. Some people may not notice any symptoms at all and are accidentally discovered to be diabetic during a routine medical check-up. The main symptoms of diabetes are:

- Increased thirst.
- Going to the toilet to urinate more than usual, especially at night.
- Increasing tiredness.
- Weight loss.
- Blurred vision.

Type 2 diabetes can be controlled successfully with lifestyle changes and medication. If you have any of the above symptoms, see your doctor immediately.

+ WHAT CAUSES TYPE 2 DIABETES?

Factors that may increase your risk of developing type 2 diabetes include:

- Age over 40 years.
- Being overweight or obese.
- Family history of diabetes.
- Belonging to certain race such as African, Afro-Caribbean or South-Asian.
- History of diabetes during pregnancy (Gestational Diabetes).
- Smoking.
- Lack of exercise.
- Women who with a medical condition called **polycystic ovary syndrome**.



+ WHEN SHOULD I SEE A DOCTOR?

You should see a doctor as soon as possible if you have:

- One or more of the above risk factors.
- One or more of the diabetic symptoms listed in this leaflet.
- Persistent infections or a slow wound healing.
- Persistently high sugar reading despite taking your prescribed medicines.

To be diagnosed with type 2 diabetes can be a frightening or overwhelming experience.

If you have questions about why it developed, what it means for your long-term health, and how it will affect your everyday life, please speak to your doctor.



+ WHAT YOUR DOCTOR WILL DO

To find out if you have type 2 diabetes, your doctor will ask questions about your symptoms, how often they occur, and your lifestyle habits.

Your doctor will examine you and then order some laboratory tests. These are usually blood sugar tests, and there are different ways to do them:

- **Random blood sugar test:** For this test, you can have blood drawn at any time throughout the day, regardless of your last meal.
- **Fasting blood sugar test:** You need to stop eating or drinking for at least 8 hours (usually overnight) before you go for this test.
- **Hemoglobin A1C test:** Doctors use this test to measure your average blood sugar level over the past two to three months.

If you are diagnosed with type 2 diabetes, your doctor may start treatment immediately or refer you to a specialist for treatment.

+ TREATMENTS FOR TYPE 2 DIABETES

The main goals of treatment are to keep your blood sugar levels within the normal range and treat other medical conditions you may have. There are two ways to achieve these goals:

Lifestyle Advice: Your doctor will usually start treatment by recommending improvements to your lifestyle habits such as:

- **Eating healthy balanced diets.** To control your weight and your body's ability to produce and respond to insulin. Your doctor may refer you to a dietitian for advice.
- **Regular exercise** to improve your body's response to insulin.

Oral Medicines: Doctors may prescribe medications if lifestyle changes alone do not keep your blood sugar level under control.

Insulin injections: Your doctor may prescribe insulin injections if lifestyle changes and taking medication cannot sufficiently improve your blood sugar levels.

Talk to your doctor for more information about medicines for type 2 diabetes.

Diabetes medications can make your blood sugar low. Some symptoms of very low blood sugar include:

- Sweating or shaking.
- Feeling anxious or confused.
- Feeling hungry.

This must be treated quickly by drinking fruit juice or taking glucose tablets.

+ GENERAL ADVICE

You can help control your type 2 diabetes by keeping to the following advice:

- **Take your medications** as instructed.
- **Speak to your doctor** about whether to continue your medicines if you are unwell and unable to eat.
- **Stop smoking** if you smoke.
- **Maintain a healthy weight.**
- **Eat a healthy diet** such as fruits, vegetables, and foods low in cholesterol.
- **Exercise regularly** for at least two and a half hours every week.
- **Have your eyes examined every year** and inspect your feet every day.
- **Control your medical conditions** by taking your prescribed medicines regularly.

IMPORTANT TIP: Try to keep a home diary of your glucose readings.

This will help you to monitor your progress.

+ FOLLOW UP

Once you start treatment to control your diabetes, you should see your doctor regularly for check-ups and follow-up treatments.

Regular check-ups will allow your doctor to monitor your health and adjust your medications to prevent side effects.



+ ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Additional information on Type 2 Diabetes can be found in the National Clinical Guideline published by The Ministry of Public Health (MOPH) Qatar.

The guideline is available to the public from the MOPH website: www.moph.gov.qa

